

WYCOMBE Wanderers, whose hopes for the current season rose sky-high after the thrilling 5-0 victory over Hendon on Saturday, came down to earth with an uncomfortable bump on Monday when they lost 2-0 at Walthamstow in the Berger Isthmian League Premier Division.

Blues conceded two goals in the first 15 minutes and spent the next 75 minutes trying to recoup their losses — without conspicuous success, largely through wasteful play in front of goal.

In this respect they missed the bustling style of recent signing Stewart Atkins, who received a hamstring injury following his hat-trick against Hendon. Dylan

Walthamstow Ave 2, Wycombe Wanderers 0 Report by MICHAEL KNOX

Evans gained preference over Derek Harris for the vacant spot but rarely threatened the home goal.

Indeed all their attack was devoid of ideas against a determined team keen to hang on to their precious early advantage.

They caught Wycombe by storm in the opening quarter-of-an-hour with some devastating attacking football which had an experienced defence reeling.

In the first minute John Maskell had to be on the alert to prevent a goal by the dangerous Alan Hunter, who came off worse in a collision with the goalkeeper. However, this

dangerous coloured striker was able to continue after attention to his nose.

If this was a danger signal then the Wanderers' defence did not seem to heed it for in the eighth minute Avenue gained a deserved lead. A foul by Alan Phillips led to a free-kick 30 yards out.

Barry Walder curled the ball towards the far left post and Steve Hamberger rose to head home in the opposite corner with Maskell grasping at thin air.

The Wycombe defence, which must take the blame for this goal, continued to look unsettled and it was their failure to clear the ball upfield that led to

Walthamstow's second goal in the 15th minute.

The ball eventually reached Gerry Jones 20 yards from goal. He unleashed a tremendous drive which seemed to be heading for the left side of the goal. However, Maskell dived full-length to his right and stopped the effort. But he could not keep hold of the ball which fell conveniently to John Worrall who slotted home through a narrow angle.

The rest of the half belonged to Wycombe who by the interval had forced eight corners to their opponents' none. But they looked like scoring from only one of them, when Alan Phillips watched his header cleared off the line by Hunter.

MEAD BOOKED

One of the marvellous aspects about Wycombe's play during the past few years has been their discipline on the field. Therefore, it came as something of a surprise to see Keith Mead cautioned for showing dissent after giving away a free-kick.

The management will be keen to stamp out these bookings as the rewards for good sportsmanship are substantial.

The second half was openly contested with both goalkeepers having to make fine saves. Avenue's Barry Willson saved well from Allanson and Howard Kennedy, while Maskell who had a shaky game, did well to tip Bobby Tappin's 20-yard drive over the bar.

Blues never really looked like cutting the deficit and will be praying that Atkins' absence from the game is not too prolonged.

WALTHAMSTOW: B. Willson; P. Sammons, E. Marjoram, G. Jones, D. Wells, S. Hamberger, B. Walder, R. Sedgwick, J. Worrall, A. Hunter (sub: R. Kean 78 mins.), R. Tappin.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, R. Davies, K. Mead, A. Phillips, D. Allanson, D. Evans, M. Holifield, S. Long, H. Kennedy, T. Scott. Sub: J. Priestley (not used).

Referee: B. O'Leary (Dagenham).

Half-time: 2-0. **Scorers:** Walthamstow — Hamberger (8 mins), Worrall (15).

ATKINS LIKELY TO MISS VITAL GAME

WYCOMBE Wanderers go into their toughest match of the season away to Isthmian League champions Enfield tomorrow without the services of their exciting new striker Stewart Atkins.

Atkins thrilled the Loakes Park fans with a brilliant hat-trick against Hendon last Saturday but before the end of the game had to leave the field with a pulled hamstring. This injury is virtually certain to keep him out of tomorrow's game and he could be missing for two or three weeks.

With Derek Harris now available for transfer, Wycombe are likely to persist with Dylan Evans in the front line. Harris is still available for selection but

Evans may get the nod, despite an unimpressive performance at Walthamstow Avenue on Monday.

For that matter none of the Blues players impressed that day and they will need to play considerably better if they are to hold Enfield, who are currently top of the table with three wins and a draw from their four matches.

The three teams they beat were Tilbury 2-0, Dagenham 2-0 and Croydon 2-1. Their draw came against Hendon — about the only encouraging sign for the Blues.

Enfield gained the double over Wycombe last season, winning 3-0 at Southbury Road and 1-0 at Loakes Park. In the latter encounter Enfield's star was Steve

King who not only scored the winning goal but turned in a brilliant display.

It is a sign of Enfield's strength that King may not even get into the side tomorrow. Micky Glover may take the final spot after netting the winner against Croydon on Monday. The other position in doubt is left back where John Tone recently came in for the injured Tony Gibson and has scored in the past two games.

The only newcomer to Southbury Road this season is the former Ilford and Leytonstone mid-field player Terry Hurlock who has play in every game. Striker Tony Bass is still at the club but must be content with a spot in the reserves.